

SITUATION REPORT NO. 03
INCIDENT NO. 2001 - 072
DATE: July 23, 2001 TIME: 4:00 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck, N.D. 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Summer Storms.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports.
3. DAMAGES: The State Water Commission reported that Devils Lake reached a new high today, 1,447.94 feet. The previous high level was 1,447.91 feet, which occurred June 25. The latest rise is the result of lake inflow from nearly four inches of rain that has fallen over the Devils Lake Basin since July 18. Engineers indicate that evaporation may offset inflow unless the area receives more heavy rain.

On July 18, three tornadoes struck Nelson County, one of which destroyed a Bergan Township farmstead, vehicles, barn and farm machinery. Tornadic winds were of such magnitude that a disc from a piece of farm machinery was imbedded in a bedroom wall at the farmstead, one-quarter mile from its original location. No one was home at the time of the incident. Other farmstead bins and outbuildings have not been located. In the city of McVile, a power outage occurred and the city's backup generator failed, hindering officials' ability to sound the sirens. Sheriff's deputies used vehicle sirens and public address systems to alert residents. Another tornado destroyed a Nelson/Griggs County tree line, blowing the trees across the road. Pea to marble sized hail fell in southern Nelson County, from Tolna to Aneta. Up to 3.5 inches of rain fell in less than one hour. All residents and patients of a hospital and three nursing homes were moved to safe areas in accordance with tornado safety plans.

In neighboring Walsh County, several rotating clouds were spotted in the Pisek and Veselyville areas during the July 18 storm. Those portions of the county received an average of one inch of rain. Pea to quarter sized hail was reported in the Park River and Grafton areas. Portion of Grafton lost power for approximately three hours. A power pole snapped during the storm, requiring crews to transfer wires to a new pole.

The National Weather Service (NWS) issued a tornado warning and nine thunderstorm warnings for Stutsman Counties during July 18 to July 22. (These warning were in addition to the three tornado warnings and one thunderstorm warning that had been issued on July 17 for the county.) On July 18, a tornado was spotted six miles west of Nortonville in LaMoure County and another tornado was reported near Sydney in Stutsman County. Both tornadoes were traveling northeast. Winds associated with the recent storms gusted from 45 to 60 miles per hour (mph). The county has once again become highly saturated with Jamestown receiving up to 4.5 inches of rain during the past six days while other areas of the county received up to eight inches during the

past week. During a July 17 storm, Northern Plains Electric lost electrical poles and lines to irrigation sites, and Minnkota Power reported damage to 29 transmission structures on a 345-kilovolt transmission line. Also on July 17, a barn was destroyed approximately 4.5 miles north of Medina, and trees were toppled in Cleveland. On July 21, winds flipped two camper trailers at Smokies Landing on the Jamestown Reservoir. Both campers, which were unoccupied, were extensively damaged. Downed power lines were reported five miles north of Jamestown on N.D. Highway 20. In the Jamestown area, approximately 1.9 inches of rain fell during a 30-minute time period. A railroad viaduct and city streets, including a detour route for U.S. Highway 281, were flooded. High winds, dime sized to golfball sized hail, heavy rain and tornadoes have damaged crops.

The Eddy County Emergency Manager has received several reports of power outages, downed power poles and uprooted trees.

On July 19, Morton County officials reported high winds and heavy rain. Power outages occurred in the city of Mandan when power lines and transformers were damaged. Other damages included vehicles and windows. The Glen Ullin area received high winds, approximately one-half inch of rain and pea sized hail. Winds of up to 30 mph were reported in Hebron, and the New Salem area received pea sized hail and wind. A funnel cloud was spotted approximately six miles south of Flasher. Power outages occurred, and one house was damaged by a fallen tree.

High winds and heavy rain battered Williams County on July 19, flattening many wheat fields. Trees were uprooted, and outbuildings were damaged. Lightning caused power outages and damaged power poles. Lightning struck a power station, causing several transformers to arc. Mercy Hospital reported smoke damage after a computer station overheated. One home caught fire from overheated electrical circuits.

Early July 21, Wells County experienced 60 mph winds that caused substantial tree and crop damage. Rain totals ranged from two inches in the northern portion of the county to two to three inches in the south.

A Flash Situation Report issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) indicates that a July 19 thunderstorm caused 35 to 50 percent crop loss in five townships. Fifty buildings sustained damage during the storm.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: Entities responding to the emergency include: public works departments, law enforcement agencies, communication centers, emergency management offices, fire and rescue teams, elected officials, and administrative offices.

STATE: N.D. Highway Patrol, State Radio Communications, N.D. Department of Transportation, N.D. National Guard, N.D. Department of Health, and the North Dakota Division of Emergency Management have been monitoring the situation.

FEDERAL: The National Weather Service continues to monitor conditions and to issue detailed weather information.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: In Nelson County, a donation fund has been organized for the family that lost its farmstead during the July 18 tornado. Volunteers from the American Red Cross, area churches and the Salvation Army are also providing assistance to the family. The Tolna Fire Department has loaned use of its flood lights for security and for repair work that is taking place at night.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: N.D. National Guard personnel provided a large tent for the family whose farmstead was destroyed during the July 18 tornado in Nelson County.
7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No additional requests have been received.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE Crews from Minnkota Power Cooperative and Northern Plains Electric Cooperative continue to repair downed lines, towers, and poles.
9. OTHER Appropriate state and local emergency operations plans have been implemented.

Situation Reports published by North Dakota Emergency Management are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director